

# Brahmavihara

The Brahma Viharas are also known as the Four Divine Emotions or The Four Divine Abodes. They are the meditative states, thoughts, and actions to be cultivated in Buddhist meditation. They are the positive emotions and states that are productive and helpful to anyone of any religion or even to the one with no religion. The result will be a very nice and good person, free from hate and ill-will. Those who cultivate the brahma viharas are guaranteed to happiness. Those who further cultivate equanimity, may reach insightful states and wisdom of enlightenment experiences.

## The Four Divine Emotions

1. Loving-kindness (Pali: Metta)
2. Compassion (Pali: Karuna)
3. Joy with others (Pali: Mudita)
4. Equanimity (Pali: Upekkha)

The Four Divine Emotions are known in Pali as the *Brahma-viharas* and are also known as the divine abidings or the divine abodes. They are emotional states to be strived for. By practicing and developing the divine emotions, we will have a peaceful and patient daily life practice.

Loving-kindness is a soft, affection and care for others and yourself. It is not a hard, romantic type of love and not a love that includes extreme attachment or controlling feelings.

Compassion is like an open heart that cares for everyone. It includes empathy, being able to see the other person's position and caring for and about them.

Joy with others, sometimes is called sympathetic joy or appreciative joy. It is the ability to be happy when you see others happy. Their joy becomes your joy as you welcome less suffering and happiness of others.

Equanimity is the balanced state of mind. It is the middle way state of mind that is neither clinging nor pushing away.

Each of the four *brahma-viharas* has what is called a near enemy and a far enemy. The near enemy is a state of mind that is close to the *brahma-vihara* and is sometimes mistaken as the good emotion, but is actually "a near enemy" and not the correct mental state. The far enemy is virtually the opposite of the *brahma-vihara* and is completely off the mark for the emotion that is strived for. This is shown in this table:

Brahma-vihara	Near enemy	Far enemy
Metta Loving-kindness	Selfish affection	Painful ill-will
Karuna Compassion	Pity	Cruelty
Mudita Joy with others	Exuberance	Resentment
Upekkha Equanimity	Indifference	Craving, clinging

**Share this:**